

REBEKAH

BY Nephthalie Lanzarote

My personal journey in studying, Life Principles from the Women of the Bible, is life changing.

My thoughts were deeply captivated by the life of Rebekah. Jenifer Liu, the facilitator of the study stated five lessons we can learn from the life of Rebekah:

1. Showing favoritism can create devastating problems between people.
2. Trying to do a good thing by evil means is wrong.
3. Spiritual blessings only go through spiritual means.
4. Deception and lying can only lead to further godlessness and will not lead to lasting happiness.
5. We must trust God in all circumstances.

At a point where I was fully devoted to my idea of what God wants, hearing these statements made me speechless with sorrow, having nothing to say in response to His Word. Also it made me realize that I must be fully devoted to God Himself, not to my idea of what God wants. Just like Rebekah, I have tried doing the best I can to accomplish God's will as I understand it with my human nature.

Coming home from that study brought me inner battle—in the realm of MY WILL before God. Finally, I yielded myself to Him, allowing Him to sanctify me completely whatever the cost.

After going through the purifying furnace of God's holiness, I have become less controlling, more relinquishing in faith and trusting fully. Something very personal happened to me in terms of trusting and believing in relationships. I have emerged in the here and now as a new person willing to let go, to allow Him to lead me whatever He pleases, all for the sake of His Honor!

Trusting God in all circumstances was a real challenge as I grow in servanthood—service and relationship. Letting God be God in trust and obedience was a hard truth to grasp. Survival was real only in and by His grace!



Milestones

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FIESTANG PINOY– KANTAHAN 2009

“In commemoration of the Philippines’ Independence Day, the ECC-Filipino Fellowship showcased an abundant display of talent in singing Original Pilipino Music on June 21, 2009 at the ECC Ministry Centre in Tsim Sha Tsui. Salo-Salong Pinoy or Fiestang Pinoy is a yearly celebration which was started in 2003. This year’s theme, “Kantahan 2009”, exposed the audience to heartwarming OPM songs rendered by the different care groups of the ECC-Filipino Fellowship.

Filipino Ministerial Fellowship International President, Rev. Ed Galang, the event guest speaker, cited the importance of music to the life of every Filipino. He also expounded Psalm 104:33, “I will sing to the Lord all my life; I will sing praise to my God as long as I live.” He noted that as Christians, we must use our God-given talent to sing praises to God.

A special dance number rendered by selected care group members surprised the audience, including both Filipino and other nationality members of ECC. Alex Chu and Anthony Ma, ECC elders, also graced the event with their respective families.”

Nephthalie Lanzarote



“Fiestang Pinoy is having unity with one another (helping hands, giving what friends need, etc.) I really feel great and I’m so happy being there just watching every group’s singing performance. I can see the uniqueness of each person so natural— everybody feeling you can do it, we can do it!!!

In this event it’s not important if you have a nice voice or if you’re good looking, what is important is to be involved with one another, hand in hand, that is to be united. God gave us everything we need we just need to follow and listen to what He is saying to us.”

Bessie Pagaduan



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Ate Fe's Corner

“LET YOUR LIFE SPEAK”

“Let Your Life Speak—Listening for the Voice of Vocation” is a book written by Parker J. Palmer, lent to me by Ptr. Bob when I was going through depression. It's a book that summarizes life into the four seasons of life which I believe had enlightened my understanding of what I have gone through, what I am going through and what I will go through.

The author says that...“The seasonal metaphor deepens our understanding of life... life stages in an endless cycle of seasons—and the cycle of seasons reminds us that the journey never ends.” For me it is looking at different perspectives or panorama of the seasons of our lives; appreciating and learning from the different stages of it. It is how rich the seasonal metaphor has been used by the author that one will be able to see the transformation from one season to the other.

First, he describes “autumn as a paradox of dying and seeding”. That is, “dying to be planted to bear fruit in some season yet to come”. He explained that “when I yield to the endless interplay of living and dying, dying and living, the life I am given will be real and colorful, fruitful and whole.”

Secondly, he describes winter as a “demanding season...It is a season when death's victory can seem supreme: few creatures stir, plants do not visibly grow, and nature feels like our enemy.” He says that our inward winters take many forms—failure, betrayal, depression and death. Although he considers “winter also as accompanied by amazing gifts of beauty, exquisite hush descent of a sky full of snow, a reminder that times of dormancy and deep rest are essential to all living things and clarity as it clears the landscape—the very ground of our being.”

Thirdly, he describes spring as “nothing but mud and muck”. He says that the word “humus”— the decayed vegetable matter and the word humility comes from the same root word. And so he further says that “it helps me understand that the humiliating events of life, the events that leave “mud on my face” or that “make my name mud”, may create the fertile soil in which something new can grow which he calls “hope”.

Lastly, he describes summer as season of “abundance or a steady state of plenty.” It is a communal act of sharing the grace to others to be able to go through another season of life.

Such is the description of life for the author that one can only imagine life as a beautiful tapestry woven by the hands of God through the seasons of life as each of us yield to the changes of the seasons in our lives.

BREAKING THROUGH TO SPIRITUAL MATURITY

“I praise and thank God for guiding me to learn about the “Breaking Through to Spiritual Maturity” by Neil Anderson. This lesson has taught me my identity in Jesus Christ and that I am his child and therefore I need to follow his commands especially on forgiveness. Of all the lessons, this is the hardest part and I thank God I am able to learn to forgive. Another important lesson for me was being free from fear as I know that God is with me and if there is a temptation I know that I have the armor of God. Through this lesson my spiritual walk with the Lord has been developed in the area of self-control and positive attitude.”

Ofelia Dulnuan

“I am very much thankful for the opportunity to study this lesson. Many things I have learned and has enlightened my mind—how to be free from those evil thoughts and beliefs. So this time I know how to deal with the situation and to focus my faith in God.”

Yen-yen Aban

“Having “Breaking Through to Spiritual Maturity” lesson helped me to realize who I am in the eyes of our Almighty God and gives me a true freedom in Christ. I am a fleshly person before, I'd been struggling with self-doubt, guilt and worries. Yes, I believe in God but I often have negative feelings. I have less faith in God and always believe in myself that I will be successful if I work hard for it. Satan keeps deceiving me and I thought that it's useless to worship God. I felt guilty and insecure but God never forsake me nor abandon me. He showed me the way to true freedom and gave me faith through His words. He put me in a community where I perfectly belong. Now, I am very happy because by God's grace I am able to overcome the bondage of darkness. Even though I feel the deceiving spirit sometimes but I know already how to cast it out and by reading the “Who Am I in Christ” and I can sing “I'm Free to be a Servant of the Lord Jesus Christ.”

Jenny Abregana

“I am so thankful that I joined the “Breaking Through to Spiritual Maturity” class because I learned a lot of things that widened my knowledge. One of this is that knowing what are those things or acts that is not pleasing before the eyes of our Almighty God and may cause us to go the wrong path in life.

Grace Caylan

OUR DAILY BREAD

GOD'S WORD IS TRUE by Bea Tomilas

I am so blessed and I thank the Lord Jesus for "Our Daily Bread" (ODB) in reaching out and cultivating a daily and practical Bible reading guide enabling people to grow and know more about Jesus. ODB has been part of my journey of faith. The Bible references and articles are very meaningful and real and meet my spiritual needs. It serves as my guide when I'm lost in my Bible reading, when I needed wisdom, comfort, repentance and when I need to be thankful of what the Lord has given me.

A very touching moment I had in my ODB reading was last January, when I was struggling with my employment situation. Having been aware of the financial crisis and with two weeks working visa left, I wasn't told if my employer will re-hire me. I began to be anxious on losing my job. I have faith but it's hard for me to pray then, but as I opened my ODB that day, I was struck by the Scripture reading in James 1:6 which says "Let him ask in faith with no doubting for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind." The additional verse is from Hebrew 1:6 which says "He who comes to God must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who diligently seek Him." I was comforted knowing that God is in control and He is going to take care of me. After a few days as I earnestly prayed, I was able to get my contract signed and my visa on process. By the time I needed to apply for a new visa, I only had three days before it expires. God spoke again to me when I read my ODB (Jan. 22) through the article entitled "The God of Victory". I was filled with awe, joy and wonder on how God made me victorious...As I was writing this, our fellowship and care group started using ODB in our prayer times. It's a delight to see God's people reading His Word together while sharing the lessons learned with one another. To God be the glory!

OUR DAILY BREAD by Luz Lab-ingon

Since I started reading "ODB", I don't want to miss any page because it is very inspiring and encouraging. God's Word is inexhaustible. It gives me fresh taste of living water and new insights every time I open it. He reveals himself through His Word and I learn how to please Him with my life and service, as I submit in obedience to him, though I am hard pressed on every side but not crushed. God is faithful and He will never abandon those who abandon themselves to God. As I continue to seek Him through "ODB" I am strengthened in His presence, uplifted and at peace with the master of my soul. Most of the time He allows me to feel the stress of the storm so that I can realize the worth of the anchor. Now that I understand my identity in Christ, I want to seek Him more all the days of my life as Isaiah 55:6 says "Seek the Lord while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near."

"LIFE PRINCIPLES FROM THE WOMEN OF THE BIBLE"

The Story of Ruth by Bea Tomilas

One of the stories of women in the Bible that I love most was the story of Ruth, found from the book of Ruth which I think was named after her because of her extraordinary character. She was a woman worth emulating. Her attitudes are desirable for every woman should model and possess. She was full of love, compassion, kindness and patience that she was willing to leave her country, people, her god and her comfort in order to be with Naomi, her mother-in-law, who was a widow and her sons were dead, very poor with no man to provide for her and distressed. She was humble and hard working gleaning from the fields of the rich from dawn to dusk to they will have food. She was respectful and obedient to her mother-in-law when she was asked to go to Boaz. And finally I think she was a woman of faith to YAHWEH, the God of Naomi when she decided to go with her. She entrusted her life to YAHWEH, who is in control of every situation and who would supply their needs and finally provided her a godly, respected and wonderful husband and was included in the genealogy of JESUS, the Messiah!

As I was reading and studying Ruth's life, I was praying that God will enable and help me emulate and model her character especially in looking after her mother-in-law and who knows God will provide me a husband like Boaz. And if ever I get married, I may not be perfect, but I want to be the best daughter-in-law. Most of all, we just have to trust God to work our every detail of our life whether we are married or single for He alone satisfies the desires of our hearts.

But Ruth said: "Entreat me not to leave you, or to turn back from following after you, for wherever you go, I will go; and wherever you lodge, I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God, my God. Where you die, I will die, and there will I be buried. The Lord do so to me, and more also, if anything but death parts you and me." **Ruth 1:16-17**

FIESTANG PINOY KANTAHAN 2009



Delivering "Sapagkat Diyos Ay Pag-ibig"



Singing "Abakada"



Rendering "Kapaligiran"



Rendering "Oras Na"



Guest Speaker Rev. Ed Galang & his son



Delivering "Tayo'y Isang Pinoy"



JUNE Birthday Celebration



Performing "Dakilang Katapatan"

